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TEXT
E.O. 12356: DECL:OADR
TAGS: PGOV, EFIN, IV
SUBJECT: "L'AFFAIRE DIOULO" -- PROTAGONIST SKIPS COUNTRY
REF: ABIDJAN 5156 (NOTAL)
1. CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE TEXT
2. THE SAGA OF ABIDJAN MAYOR EMMANUEL DIOULO CONTINUES.
TWO-INCH RED HEADLINES ON FRATERNITE MATIN OF MARCH 27
SAY: "DIOULO IN FLIGHT," AND REPORTAGE SIGNED BY THE
EDITOR IN CHIEF AUGUSTE MIREMONT GIVES READERS THE NEWS
THAT DIOULO IS IN BELGIUM; HAS HIRED JACQUES VERGES AS HIS
LAWYER (VERGES LATER IS DESCRIBED AS TAKING CASES HIS
COLLEAGUES DISDAIN, INCLUDING KLAUS BARBIE, HOMOSEXUALS,
AND A GERMAN TERRORIST); AND NOTES A STATEMENT BY VERGES
THAT A "WHITE PAPER" WILL BE PUBLISHED MAY 10 "TO FIX
PRECISELY THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF ONE AND ANOTHER . . . NO

**NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT
2000**

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ONE BEING UNTOUCHABLE."

3. PULLING OUT ALL THE STOPS, AND THEREBY TENDING TO CONFIRM OUR EARLIER ANALYSIS THAT DIOULO DEPARTED FROM THE SCRIPT IN REFUSING TO PLAY THE SCAPEGOAT, MIREMONT SAYS DIOULO (AND HIS LAWYER) "LIE, ALWAYS LIE TO DEFEND HIMSELF, AND IF THAT DOESN'T WORK, USE BLACKMAIL. THESE ARE THE CUSTOMARY PRACTICES OF (DIOULO), WHICH HAVE NOT SO FAR PRODUCED ANY RESULT BUT WHICH REMAIN HIS PREFERRED WEAPONS. IT IS A FACT THAT ONCE ONE ACQUIRES A TASTE FOR SUCH METHODS, ONE KNOWS NOTHING ELSE AND ONCE THEY HAVE BROUGHT ONE TO A CERTAIN FINANCIAL EMINENCE, IT BECOMES DIFFICULT TO RELINQUISH THEM TO USE LEGAL METHODS. MR. EMMANUEL DIOULO IS OF THIS TYPE. EMBEZZLEMENT, BLUFF, AND BLACKMAIL HAVE SERVED HIM SO WELL TO REALIZE QUICKLY CERTAIN OF HIS AMBITIONS THAT IT WOULD HAVE BEEN DIFFICULT FOR HIM TO HAVE TURNED OVER A NEW LEAF AND TO RE-MAKE ANOTHER EMMANUEL DIOULO: SHREWD, INTELLIGENT, AND HONEST." NEEDLESS TO SAY, MIREMONT CONCLUDES THAT DIOULO'S FLIGHT ESSENTIALLY CONFIRMS HIS GUILT, AND CLOSES WITH THE WARNING THAT THOSE WHO TRY TO USE DEFAMATION, INTIMIDATION, AND BLACKMAIL TO OBSTRUCT JUSTICE WILL BE DEALT WITH FORCEFULLY.

4. IF WE INTERPRET ALL THIS CORRECTLY, PARTICULARLY THE REFERENCE TO "REFORM," THE POWERS THAT BE PLANNED ON PUNISHMENT, PENITENCE, AND EVENTUAL REHABILITATION FOR DIOULO, THUS REPEATING HOUPHOUET'S PREFERRED PRACTICE IN DEALING WITH TROUBLEMAKERS OVER THE YEARS. WE DON'T KNOW WHAT WILL HAPPEN NOW THAT DIOULO IS OUT OF THE COUNTRY. CLEARLY, HE COULD NOT HAVE LEFT IF THE GOVERNMENT SERIOUSLY WANTED TO KEEP HIM HERE, PARTICULARLY ONCE HIS PARLIAMENTARY IMMUNITY HAD BEEN REVOKED. THUS, ONE CAN SPECULATE THAT SOME SORT OF DEAL WAS STRUCK BY WHICH HE WOULD BE PERMITTED TO LEAVE IN RETURN FOR SILENCE ONCE ABROAD. IF DIOULO IS NOW GOING BACK ON THAT DEAL, IT WOULD ACCOUNT FOR THE PRESS' SEMI-HYSTERICAL INSISTENCE THAT WHATEVER HE MAY SAY IS "LIES -- ALL LIES."

5. ON THE OTHER HAND, THERE MAY NOT HAVE BEEN A DEAL. A LONG-TIME AFRICA HAND WITH GOOD LOCAL CONTACTS TOLD US THAT DIOULO SHOWED UP AT THE AIRPORT WITH MINUTES TO SPARE BEFORE THE DEPARTURE OF THE FRIDAY SABENA FLIGHT AND WAS ABLE TO BOARD THE PLANE BECAUSE THE POLICE ON DUTY AT PASSPORT CONTROL COULDN'T LOCATE ANY OF THEIR SUPERIORS TO DECIDE WHETHER DIOULO SHOULD BE HELD OR PERMITTED TO LEAVE. THIS VERSION CERTAINLY IS CREDIBLE GIVEN THE PROPENSITY OF LOCAL LOW-LEVEL FUNCTIONARIES TO REFUSE RESPONSIBILITY FOR ACTION WITHOUT DIRECTIONS FROM HIGHER UP, BUT IF IT IS TRUE, ONE WONDERS WHY THE POLICE HAD NOT BEEN GIVEN INSTRUCTIONS ABOUT DIOULO. THE COUNTRY'S TOP COP, MINISTER OF INTERNAL SECURITY GENERAL N'DAW, IS SAID TO BE MOST ANNOYED ABOUT DIOULO'S DEPARTURE.

6. WE HAVE HEARD RUMORS IN BANKING CIRCLES THAT IF DIOULO DOES NAME NAMES AND CITE CASES, A GOOD MANY HIGHLY PLACED IVORIANS (E.G., MINISTER OF STATE EKRA AND AGRICULTURE MINISTER BRA KANON) WOULD BE IMPLICATED. WE ALSO HAVE BEEN TOLD BY A RANKING MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY THAT THE PROSPECT OF DIOULO'S "WHITE PAPER" HAS THE COUNTRY'S

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SUBJECT: "L'AFFAIRE DIOULO" -- PROTAGONIST SKIPS COUNTRY LEADERSHIP "TERRIFIED RIGHT TO THE TOP." THIS MAY BE SOMETHING OF AN EXAGGERATION, BUT IT IS CLEAR THAT THE LEADERSHIP HAS A TIGER BY THE TAIL, AND THE SITUATION COULD BECOME TRULY IMPORTANT IF DIOULO WERE TO SO DISCREDIT THE LIKELY CHOICES FOR THE VICE-PRESIDENCY AND THE SUCCESSION THAT HOUPHOUET FELT HIMSELF COMPELLED TO PASS OVER WHOEVER WOULD OTHERWISE HAVE BEEN HIS FIRST CHOICE.

7. WE OF COURSE DON'T KNOW WHETHER DIOULO WILL STAY IN BELGIUM OR MOVE ON. SOME RUMORS PRIOR TO HIS FLIGHT HAD IT THAT HE WOULD GO TO THE UNITED STATES. A QUICK CHECK OF OUR VISA RECORDS DOES NOT INDICATE A RECENT ISSUANCE. IF DIOULO HAS A CURRENT U.S. VISA, IT CANNOT HAVE MUCH VALIDITY LEFT.

8. WE CANNOT YET PREDICT HOW THE DIOULO AFFAIR MAY AFFECT PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF THE COUNTRY'S LEADERSHIP. INITIALLY, PUBLIC REACTION SUPPORTED PROSECUTION OF DIOULO, WHO WAS SEEN AS ONE OF THE "FAT CATS" IN THE IVORIAN SYSTEM. MORE RECENTLY, WE ARE BEGINNING TO HEAR REPORTS THAT THE PDCI'S PERCEIVED PERSECUTION OF DIOULO IS TURNING HIM INTO SOMETHING OF A FOLK HERO FOR SOME OF THE MEN IN THE STREET. PROBABLY MORE IMPORTANT, SOME OBSERVERS ARE CONCLUDING FROM THE UNEXPECTED DEVELOPMENTS IN THE CASE THAT HOUPHOUET AND HIS INNER CIRCLE OF ADVISERS HAVE LOST SOME OF THEIR ABILITY TO CONTROL EVENTS ON THE DOMESTIC POLITICAL FRONT. MILLER

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